



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400
Ken Wagner
Commissioner

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Waiver to extend the period of availability of FFY 2013 school improvement grant funds (SIG 1003g) submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on January 20, 2017.

The reasons for this request are several and interrelated. First, RIDE believes this will allow the more strategic deployment of SIG money to LEAs by allowing the combination of funds across several years to maximize impact on bold, transformative initiatives. Second, RIDE has newly enacted state legislation known as the Family and Schools Empowerment Act, one intent of which is to support the Rhode Island SIG “Empowered Leadership” state improvement model. We believe the extra time allowed by this request will permit thoughtful planning and quality execution of this new model to which RIDE is deeply committed. Third, the transition planning for the Every Student Succeeds Act is well underway in Rhode Island, and this additional time and flexibility will ensure that SIG dollars are aligned with the overarching state plan, goals, and strategies developed in this new national context. Any SIG goals will reflect progress against exit criteria in the accountability system outlined in the state plan. If granted, this waiver will allow RIDE to issue competitive grant applications to our SIG-eligible LEAs with an emphasis on the new statutory and regulatory opportunities created by the Family and School Empowerment Act, ESSA, and the Empowered Leadership state SIG model, awarding the top four to six schools with grants that are large enough to have deep, systemic impacts on LEA and school operation.

In requesting this waiver, RIDE must provide all LEAs and the public with notice and opportunity to comment on the request. RIDE will submit all comments to USED for consideration when determining whether to grant the waiver request. Please submit all comments via email to krystafer.redden@ride.ri.gov by February 20th, 2017.